This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
GENERAL LIBRARY
OCTAVIA WILLIAMS BATES
BEQUEST

DA
507
.1793
F88

Kenilworth book club.

Received Sept 10. E Willes

——— 19 J Morley

(X572) Octob 12 — Roberts 19th

19th Octr — J Dalrymple 22d

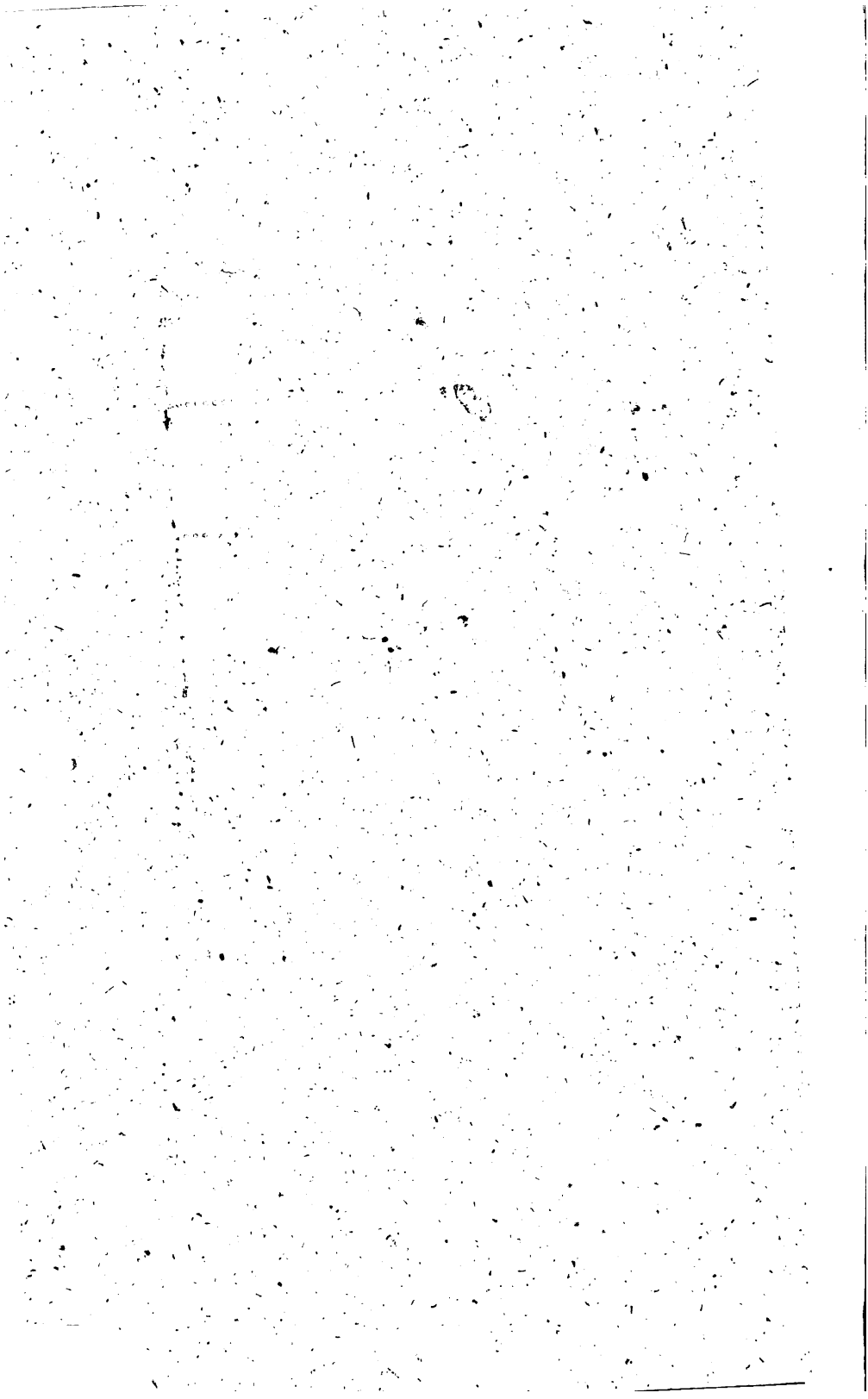
25 Octo [illegible] — 28

28th Octr Biddulph 29th

29th J Stanton ——— 31st

31 Pat. Don ——— Novr 1

Novr 1, J Hallifax ——— Novr 1



PEACE AND UNION

RECOMMENDED TO

THE ASSOCIATED BODIES

OF

REPUBLICANS

AND

ANTI-REPUBLICANS.

BY WILLIAM FREND, M.A.

FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

THE SECOND EDITION.

CAMBRIDGE:

PRINTED BY B. FLOWER,

FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSONS, LONDON:

TO BE HAD OF THE PRINTER, AND OF W. PAGE, BOOKSELLER.

MDCCXCIII.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

DA
507
.1793
F88

RG

Bates
Law
10-14-46
56315

INTRODUCTION.

FOR writing this book, and publiſhing it within the univerſity, the author was ſummoned to appear in the vice-chanceller's court, on a charge, that in it "religion, as eſtabliſhed by publick authority within this realm, and alſo all eccleſiaſtical ranks and dignities, are impugned." The plan was formed by a cabal, conſiſting of twenty-ſeven maſters of arts and doctours, who met at the houſe of the judge, and appointed a committee of five perſons, to carry on in their names the proſecution. When the judge and the proſecuters are of the ſame party, the reſult of a legal proceſs is eaſily divined. Eight days were conſumed on this diſpute de lana caprina, and in bringing the defendant to his ſentence. On the ſeventh, the judge put into the authour's hand an unintelligible paper, which he was ordered to ſign; and on his refuſal, on the eighth day, to comply with ſuch a requeſt, ſentence was paſſed, namely, "that he is baniſhed from the univerſity."

The law, on which this ſentence is ſuppoſed to be founded, was made in the reign of queen Elizabeth, and there is no inſtance upon record of a perſon being puniſhed under it, for merely writing or publiſhing a book. The paſſages, which have offended the twenty-ſeven, are marked by ſingle inverted commas; but, to ſuit the purpoſes of the proſecuters, they found it neceſſary to garble them, and to omit and inſert at pleaſure.

The full account of the proceedings in the univerſity will be ſubmitted by the authour to the publick; from which it will appear clearly, that there is no ſuch thing as an obſolete law to men, who have, or fancy they have, power in their hands, and that the liberty of the preſs is, in theſe times, in very imminent danger.

PEACE AND UNION.

THE royal proclamations, and the number of aſſociated bodies on various pretexts, in different parts of the kingdom, are a ſufficient proof that the minds of men are at preſent greatly agitated; and that the utmoſt vigour of government, aided by the exertions of every lover of his country, is neceſſary to preſerve us from falling into all the horrours attendant on civil commotions. Having been warned of our danger, it becomes us to conſider by what means we may eſcape the impending evil: and no one ſhould take a deciſive part, without weighing fully and impartially the conſequences of his conduct. The aſſaſſinations, murders, maſſacres, burning of houſes, plundering

Introduction.

dering of property, open violations of juſtice, which have marked the progreſs of the French revolution, muſt ſtagger the boldeſt republican in his wiſhes to overthrow any conſtitution: and, on the other hand, he muſt be a weak or a wicked man, who, loſt in admiration of the beauties of a voluptuous and effeminate court, forgets the miſeries of the poor ſubjects, whoſe bodies were bowed down to the grindſtone for its ſupport, and brands, with every mark of ariſtocratick inſolence, the efforts of thoſe patriots, who put an end to the deſpotiſm of the antient government. It is an aweful example, which providence holds out to an aſtoniſhed world; and happy will that nation be, which derives from it leſſons of wiſdom. Surely there cannot be a diſſentient voice on this opinion; and no blame can that writer incur, who calls on the contending parties in our own country, to make a proper uſe of the divine judgements, and, inſtead of exaſperating each other by uſeleſs invectives, to unite cordially in their endeavours to promote the common good, and to remove thoſe grievances,

if

if any ſuch there be, which occaſion the preſent diſcontent.

If the diſpute between the contending parties were ſolely this, whether the preſent government ſhould be overthrown or not, the matter might be brought to a ſpeedy iſſue. It would be urged on the one ſide, that the government has, for theſe hundred years laſt paſt, been acknowledged as the beſt in Europe, and unleſs a much better is pointed out to us, it will be unwiſe in the extreme to deſtroy a ſyſtem, under which we have experienced ſo much publick and private happineſs. The advocates for a republick may anſwer, that the government, among many bad ones, was really the beſt, but the expences of it were enormous; a thouſand millions of money have been drawn from the ſubjects, which, had they been expended on the country, would have converted it into a paradiſe, and we have now before us the inſtances of America and France, which, on the ruins of their antient forms, have erected much nobler edifices. Let us ſee, whether a reaſonable and moderate man may not be able to bring

Governments of America and France no examples for England.

theſe parties nearer to each other. The governments of the reſt of Europe are in general ſuppoſed by all Engliſhmen to be much worſe than their own. In common with them ours took its origin from the feudal ſyſtem; but, from a variety of cauſes, moſt of the evils attendant on that ſyſtem, which retained their force on the continent, have been, in our country, gradually aboliſhed. That the expences of government have been enormous muſt be confeſſed by all parties, but this is not ſo much owing to the form of our conſtitution, as to the wretched plan, introduced in the laſt century, of anticipating in one the revenues of the ſucceeding years. Let us caſt a veil over this failing of our common anceſters, and endeavour, that poſterity ſhall have no reaſon to reproach us for following, with open eyes, ſo ſhameful an example. The preſent ſituation of France forbids us to conſider, as yet, its conſtitution as worthy of imitation. It has not received the ſanction of experience, and we muſt wait till the wretched deſpots, who, with unparalleled inſolence, dared to interrupt

interrupt its courſe, conſent to leave a nation in poſſeſſion of the undoubted right to form its own internal government. Much leſs can America be urged as an example for us: our cuſtoms, laws and ſituation have inured us to habits unknown to the new world, and a ſudden change from our form to theirs might be as prejudicial to the happineſs of this country, as the impoſition of our conſtitution might be to the inhabitants of America. Beſides, if inſtead of the conſtitutions of France and America, the moſt perfect ſyſtem that human ingenuity can deviſe, ſhould be preſented to us, it does by no means follow, that we ſhould be juſtifiable in forcing the acceptance of it on our fellow countrymen.

Conſtitution to be amended, not overthrown.

Every change is attended with danger, and none ſhould be adopted where the individuals injured by it are very numerous, in proportion to thoſe who are benefited. The happineſs of this generation is to be taken into the eſtimate, and it is not ſufficient to aſſure us, that the proſpects of a future race will be improved by our ſchemes. Where is the

the man, who can look ſo far forward into futurity, as to convince us, that our ſucceſſers might not, from a different concatenation of circumſtances, receive far greater bleſſings than we can beſtow on them by the ruin of ourſelves? As therefore the overthrow of our conſtitution, with or without the introduction of the moſt perfect ſyſtem, could not be compaſſed without injuring a vaſt number of our fellow creatures, it ſhould ſeem, that the contending parties might accede nearer to each other, if it could be proved, that our government is ſuſceptible of improvement, and that various changes might be introduced for the benefit of the community at large, without injuring a ſingle individual. If this ſhould appear to be the caſe, we may, conſiſtently with our duty to ourſelves and poſterity, take the proper ſteps for meliorating our condition, and leave, to future generations, the care of bringing government to the utmoſt point of perfection.

Parliamentary reform.

I. There is no ſubject on which the contending parties are ſo much at

at variance, as on that of parliamentary reform. On the one hand it is aſſerted, that the conſtitution, as ſettled at the revolution, muſt remain inviolate; on the other, that the corruptions of government render a reform in the repreſentation of the people, and the duration of parliaments abſolutely neceſſary. Reform is a very vague word, and it is too often made either a term of reproach or commendation, as it ſuits the intereſt of the ſpeaker. The true ſenſe of the word implies, that the things to be reformed had been previouſly in a better ſtate; and that the intention of the reformer is to bring them to their original deſtination. Let us then divide our diſputed topick into its two component parts, a reform of the duration of parliaments, and the repreſentation of the people, and, conſidering each ſeparately, ſee whether we may not, on ſome points, bring the contending parties to an agreement.

1. On the duration of parliaments. One party is for ſhortening this duration, and reducing it to a period, on which there is a variety of opinions; Duration of Parliament.

nions; ſome being for triennial, ſome for biennial, and others for annual parliaments. Here we find a common point of union, for the other contending party declares its attachment to the government founded at the revolution, in which triennial parliaments are a conſiderable feature. We may ſay then to the advocates for ſhortening the duration of parliaments, agree that three years ſhall be the period, and the other contending party muſt, unleſs it hath loſt every ſentiment of propriety, concur with you in promoting ſo ſalutary a meaſure. If it doth not, the publick muſt ſee clearly, that its reverence for the conſtitution founded at the revolution is merely a pretence, to gain over to its ſide the favour of a deluded populace.

Repreſentation. 2. On a reform of the repreſentation of the people. The moſt clamorous perſon for this ſpecies of reform, might be ſtaggered with a ſimple queſtion. Have the people of England been ever ſo well repreſented as at the preſent moment?

Increaſe of votes in boroughs; The number of votes in ſeveral boroughs has been conſiderably diminiſhed,

niſhed, in others much enlarged, ſince the charters were firſt given to them: but it is not improbable that the number on the whole has been increaſed. In counties the qualification for a vote is a freehold worth forty ſhillings a year; and, if we reflect on the increaſe of riches in this country within the laſt hundred years, we cannot heſitate to affirm, that the number of freeholders muſt have been conſiderably enlarged. If therefore the mere increaſe of the number of voters were an object to one of our contending parties, we might tell them, that time was gradually removing their complaints: but a wiſe and temperate man would not give ſuch an anſwer, when he conſidered, that time was alſo increaſing ſome complaints, and that government is properly called on to rectify the abuſes prevailing in ſeveral boroughs. In counties.

In the courſe of not many years muſt the electers of one place grapple in the waves for their town, and at preſent a ſeptennial conſequence is given to a heap of ruins. This is a real evil, and ought to be redreſſed, Evil conſequence of the decay of boroughs.

and it muſt be redreſſed, as ſoon as men turn from the clamorous loquacity of pretended oratours and politicians to the ſober dictates of common ſenſe. The ſevereſt ſarcaſm againſt the Houſe of Commons is to be found in the writings of a parliamentary declaimer, diſtinguiſhed by his purſuits of reform even to the privacies of his ſovereign, and the remote corners of the eaſt, while he remains a declared enemy to the word, when it comes home to himſelf and his own connections. "The Houſe of Com-
"mons," ſays this writer, "is with-
"in itſelf a much more ſubtle and
"artful combination of parts and
"powers, than people are generally
"aware of. What knits it to the
"other members of the conſtitution,
"what fits it to be at once the great
"ſupport and the great controul of
"government, what makes it of ſuch
"admirable ſervice to that monarchy,
"which, if it limits, it ſecures and
"ſtrengthens, would require a long
"diſcourſe belonging to the leiſure
"of a contemplative man, not to one
"whoſe duty it is to join in commu-
"nicating practically to the people

"the

" the bleſſings of ſuch a conſtitution." In other words, by means of rotten boroughs men of fortune are able to raiſe a party againſt, and to clog the wheels of government; by means of places and penſions government is enabled to oppoſe them: the houſe is like a field of battle, with this difference only, that the victorious party changes ſeats and opinions with the conquered, and the conteſt is renewed.*

The fact then being undeniable, that ſeveral of our boroughs have grown worſe ſince the revolution, Remedy propoſed.

* If to deal out the moſt virulent invectives againſt perſons in poſſeſſion of power, if to coaleſce with thoſe very perſons to gain a ſhare of that power, if to draw down the tears, and ſhatter the nerves of faſhionable ſenſibility, and overwhelm with opprobrious language a perſon, whoſe power once extended over a vaſt empire, if theſe are the marks of a great oratour and politician, the writer, whom I have quoted, carries away the palm from every hero in every age. Whether Mr. Haſtings is guilty or not of the high crimes laid to his charge, I ſhall not pretend to determine, and it appears to me, that very few indeed will be able to lay their hands on their breaſts, and from a peruſal of the evidence and ſpeeches declare upon their honour, that he is either guilty or not guilty. The ſpeeches of the celebrated declaimer above alluded to, muſt, from the nature of his language, have made a great impreſſion on many minds in favour of the much injured governer.

we may fairly call on our contending parties to concur in rectifying this abuſe. The evil might, without much inconvenience, be remedied by a plan ſimilar to the one following: Let a liſt be made out of the voters in every borough, and let it be ordered by parliament, that every borough, not having a thouſand voters, ſhall, out of the inhabitants of the town or hundred, gradually raiſe them to that number. It is ſaid gradually, otherwiſe the new comers might be too inſolent with their acquired power; and on that account the boroughs having five hundred voters ſhould increaſe their number by fifty every year, thoſe under that number by twenty or thirty. Thus the boroughs will be brought gradually nearer to their original form: but neither party muſt imagine, that the mere increaſe of voters will, without other ſteps, ſecure the integrity of the electers, or the repreſentatives.

Evil of ſeptennial elections;

It is a trite remark, that to a foreigner the people of England ſeem, every ſeven years, infected with madneſs. On the one hand are to be ſeen gentlemen of the firſt rank ruining

ing their eſtates to ingratiate themſelves with the populace, on the other hand the people giving themſelves up to every ſpecies of intemperance. This is an evil which calls loudly for redreſs; and it would be well if the contending parties, confining themſelves ſolely to the rectifying of this abuſe, would lay a foundation for the praiſes and improvement of poſterity.

and preſent mode of nomination.

If vaſt multitudes are permitted to be called together, and treated at the expence of the candidates, this evil will always remain; and the only way to remove it is by deviſing ſome plan, which ſhall ſecure to the elector an eaſy way of giving his vote with as little infringement on his time as poſſible. The practice of calling a county together on a day of nomination is attended with manifeſt inconvenience. The county cannot be aſſembled, and the mode of determining the ſenſe of ſuch meetings is vague and inconcluſive.

Nomination regulated.

If there is any neceſſity for a day of nomination, the advantages expected from it might be better ſecured by delegates from pariſhes, ſummoned

ſummoned by the ſheriff of the county. Thus, on an appointed day, let the freeholders meet in their reſpective pariſhes, and every perſon being at liberty to name a candidate, let them elect a delegate to carry the liſt to the general meeting. At this meeting let the delegates confer together in the preſence of the ſheriff, as preſident, on the merits of the candidates, and, having given their votes, let each take with him the reſult, to be laid before the freeholders on the day of election. On that day the delegate, being the preſident of the pariſh meeting, ſhould acquaint the electers with what had paſſed on the day of nomination, and receiving their votes ſhould make out two liſts, the one to be carried to the ſheriff, the other to be preſerved in the pariſh. On a ſubſequent day the delegates ſhould again meet the ſheriff, who, caſting up the numbers, ſhould declare thoſe to be the repreſentatives, who had the majority of votes in their favour. Thus members would be returned to parliament with very little interruption to the induſtry of the country,

and

and if we take into the eſtimate the bribes, the quarrels, the riots, the drunkenneſs, the profaneneſs, the blaſphemies, the perjuries, which will be avoided by this plan, no one, who is a friend to religion or virtue, can heſitate to give it his heartfelt concurrence.*

Our conſtitution, admitting a repreſentative government, permits us to reaſon on it, and ſpeculative men will naturally be led to purſue their reſearches on ſuch a ſubject to a greater degree of refinement than is pleaſing to the vulgar, to whom they ſeem to be trifling with utopian ſchemes and imaginary ideas of perfection. Still men of thought ſhould not be diſcouraged by the vague ſurmiſes of rude and uncultivated minds. Had the preſent conſtitution of our country been propoſed to the valiant band under William the conquerer, it would have been received as an

Reſearches into the art of government not to be derided.

* The term freeholder has been uſed, but there ſeems to be no reaſon, why the copyholders ſhould be excluded from the right of ſuffrage. And inſtead of requiring a certain qualification in landed property from the candidate, any man who had a majority of votes ſhould take his ſeat in the Houſe, and be allowed, for obvious reaſons, five hundred a year for his attendance.

impracticable

impracticable ſcheme, the wildeſt that the brain of man had ever conceived, and the ſchemes which we deride may be the means of innumerable bleſſings to future generations. Let the ſpeculative man then indulge himſelf in his theories; and let us propoſe to him to inquire, whether repreſentative government can be carried on to perfection, on a better plan than that laid down by an inſpired legiſlater, and adopted in part by the wiſeſt monarch that ever ſat on the Engliſh throne.

Antient diviſion of the country recommended.

The diviſions of hundreds and tithings being adopted, let the perſons of age in each tithing elect a preſident, let the preſidents of ten tithings elect the preſident of the hundred, the preſidents of ten hundreds elect the preſident of the thouſand, and ſo on. Each diviſion of ten thouſand families ſhould ſend two members to parliament. The votes ſhould be taken by the heads of tithings, and carried by them to the heads of hundreds, to be conveyed to the heads of thouſands, who, with the head of the ten thouſand, ſhould declare the repreſentatives elected.

Thus

Thus none but the officers would be put to any material inconvenience in giving their votes: the offices ſhould be annual and biennial, the headſhips of tithings and hundreds annual, the reſt biennial. Such a diviſion would not only be uſeful for the purpoſes of obtaining a better repreſentation in parliament, but it might likewiſe reſtore the peace and tranquillity, which is ſaid to have prevailed in the days of Alfred. Thus the preſidents of hundreds and the ſuperiour diviſions might be inveſted with the power of a juſtice of the peace, an officer of the greateſt publick utility, very much wanted at preſent in many extenſive diſtricts. From the preſidents of hundreds the grand jury ſhould always be ſelected, and the petty jury from the heads of tithings. All laws, that have received the ſanction of parliament ſhould be ſent to the preſidents of ten thouſands, by them to be diſtributed among the inferiour diviſions, ſo that every law relating to the people in general ſhould be ſent to the heads of tithings, particular bills to the heads of hundreds and the ſuperiour diviſions. The laws received

by the head of a tithing ſhould be read to the tithing, and, if objected to by the majority, the objection with the number of votes ſhould be ſent to the head of the hundred, and by him to the ſuperiour officer, and ſo on; and if it ſhould appear that the majority of the kingdom was againſt any bill, it ſhould be ſubjected to a reviſion in the next parliament. Thus would two main points be gained by this diviſion of the country; the houſe of commons would, as far as human imperfection admits, be really a repreſentation of the people, and all laws relating to the conduct of an individual would not only be known to him, but receive his approbation or cenſure.

Perfect repreſentation not to be attained at preſent.

We ſhould pay too great a compliment to our countrymen by ſuppoſing them capable of receiving or acting under ſo enlarged a plan of repreſentation. The minds of men muſt be more enlightened, the lower claſſes muſt be better inſtructed, a more familiar and friendly intercourſe muſt take place between all ranks of ſociety, before ſuch a plan could produce its due effect. This conſideration

tion ought to have ſome weight with the contending parties. The one might be ſpurred on to teach the lower claſſes by every mean in their power the bleſſings of a free and good government, and the ardour of the other for introducing new forms might, by reflecting on the real ſtate of the peaſantry of this country, be conſiderably repreſſed. And, by accuſtoming ourſelves to reflect on the difficulties on both ſides of the queſtion, we might all, with better temper, liſten to the remarks made on government by men of oppoſite parties; we ſhould not confound republicans with levellers, and to the exaggerating encomiaſters of the preſent conſtitution with all its defects, we might apply the words of eaſtern wiſdom, Let another man praiſe thee, and not thine own mouth, a ſtranger and not thine own lips.*

Not neceſſarily productive of happineſs.

To hear ſome perſons talk of perfect repreſentation, one would imagine that it muſt be the precurſour of a ſecond golden age. The wiſdom of the nation would be collected as it were into a focus, but we forget that

* Prov. xxvii. 2.

its folly would be as forcibly concentrated. If the majority of a nation conſiſts of weak, ignorant, and barbarous characters, incapable of being meliorated by religion, and obſtinately attached to vicious and bad cuſtoms, it cannot be ſuppoſed that their repreſentatives ſhould excel in virtue, or that the laws compoſed by them ſhould be calculated for general happineſs. If the people were ſuperſtitiouſly inclined, perſecution againſt individuals of a different opinion would receive the ſanction of their houſe of commons with the ſame eaſe, as it has been enforced by the edicts of a deſpotick prince: and the lover of peace and tranquillity, the philoſopher whoſe reſearches extend our knowledge, and the cultivater of the arts, which ſoften and embelliſh life, would ſeek for that liberty under the ſhade of an arbitrary court, which was denied to them by the laws or conduct of a tumultuous rabble.*

* Zimmerman relates, ſomewhere in his excellent work on national pride, an anecdote of a gentleman who wiſhed to enjoy the liberty of ſpeaking his ſentiments on all ſubjects. For this purpoſe he choſe Zurich, ſtaid there ten days, and then retired to Liſbon.

II. Hence

II. Hence then let us ſeriouſly re- Law.
commend to the contending parties to employ their thoughts on other topicks beſide thoſe of parliamentary reform, leſt, being attached to a ſingle object, they overlook the abuſes, which may gradually undermine the peace and happineſs of ſociety. Some of the aſſociated bodies have very properly declared, that our conſtitution has provided the means of rectifying abuſes, and they would do well to point out thoſe, which require immediate reform. We may celebrate in the loudeſt tone the praiſes of our conſtitution, yet, if our laws are vague and inconcluſive, eaſily to be wreſted by the powerful, and too expenſive for the poor, if puniſhments bear no proportion to crimes, and the moſt atrocious murderer is levelled with a petty delinquent, it muſt be confeſſed that a ſtranger would have reaſon to exclaim, the theory of your government is excellent, but your laws betray a degree of rudeneſs and barbarity not to be expected in ſo enlightened a nation.

1. Our

Obſcurity. 1. Our laws ſtand certainly in need of reform, and it were to be wiſhed that the leading powers in our ſenate would exert themſelves in giving us a better code. The evil is acknowledged by all parties, but it is the ſuppoſed intereſt of one to increaſe, by voluminous digeſts, the intricacy of the law. It might be urged, that the laws affecting the lower claſſes of the people ſhould be equal, clear, and deciſive, ſuch that a ſchool-boy might read them, and be brought up with a ſenſe of their propriety, and a fear of offending them. This, without doubt, would be of great advantage to the poor; and the political writers of the laſt century recommended the practice of a neighbouring country, by which the rich might be equally benefited.

Expenſiveneſs. 2. Many of the rich are, to their coſt, acquainted with the expenſiveneſs of ſuits depending on the litigation of landed property, which would be at an end, by the eaſy plan of regiſtering it in every county.

Regiſter defective. 3. Some perſons complain, that they have found a difficulty of recovering, or have even loſt an eſtate from

the imperfect regiſters of births in pariſhes, from which all that are not members of the church are excluded. Suppoſing a civil arrangement for theſe purpoſes, the land of every perſon and the births of all children might be ſo regiſtered, as to prevent a multiplicity of law ſuits.

Entails.

4. A fiction in law is a mean at preſent of ſaving the country from the iniquity and oppreſſion attending the abſurd and barbarous cuſtom of entailing property on remote deſcendants, but would it not be much better, by acting in an open and direct manner, to prevent the father from forgetting the ties of blood, and by aboliſhing entails entirely, oblige every one to act up to the principles of juſtice?

Manerial rights.

5. Manerial rights were of uſe in the feudal ages, but different times produce different cuſtoms, and a reviſal of all the laws in manours might be made beneficial to the lord and his dependant.

Game laws.

6. Our game laws are cruel and oppreſſive, contrary to every principle of good government, and calculated only to produce a ſpirit of ariſtocratick

ariſtocratick inſolence in the higher, and that of meanneſs, pilfering, and plunder in the loweſt claſſes. It has been urged in their defence, that if it were not for them, we ſhould be over-run with poachers; but in fact, as high duties made the ſmugglers, the game laws make the poachers. Deſtroy the game laws entirely, let game be ſold freely in our markets, and the poachers, as the ſmugglers have done lately in many places, will return to the habits of uſeful induſtry. We muſt not omit here, that the higher claſſes will be benefited: for in what county can we go without hearing of the petty ſquabbles of country ſquires, about hares and partridges, nauſeous tales, diſguſting to every man of ſenſe and a liberal education.

Poor laws. 7. The amendment of the poor laws requires a cautious and ſkillful hand, and much praiſe is due to ſome very reſpectable members of the houſe of commons, for endeavouring to excite the attention of their colleagues to this ſubject. There is an excellent precept in the moſaical law, which ſhould be a guide to all legiſlaters;

legiſlaters; thou ſhalt not muzzle the ox which treadeth out the corn. The poor are the inſtruments of the eaſe, comfort, and luxury of the rich, and it would be contrary to the temper of engliſhmen, as well as the ſpirit of chriſtians, to be ungrateful to thoſe, from whom we all derive our ſupport. If a labouring man does not receive ſufficient wages to enable him to bring up a numerous family, and to lay by ſomething for his ſupport in the decline of life, it is but common juſtice, that they, who have been enriched by his labours, ſhould, when his ſtrength is gone, make his latter days chearful and comfortable. So far then from diminiſhing the poor rates, there ſeems, unleſs the price of labour ſhould be conſiderably increaſed, ſufficient reaſon for increaſing them. The poor rates muſt, if the price of labour is given, increaſe with the increaſe of taxes; for every tax laid on the conſumption of the poor is a great diminution of his pittance, and the halfpenny or farthing, a trifle to the tax impoſers, is ſeverely felt in the cottages of induſtry. Should theſe laws

be ever reviſed, there is a claſs in ſociety which may be greatly benefited; this is the claſs juſt above poverty, juſt above want themſelves, but by means of rates, reduced to a worſe ſituation than thoſe who receive their benefactions. To follow the beautiful gradations of nature in all her operations, this claſs ſhould be releaſed from the poor rates: thus there would be three claſſes in ſociety, that which pays to the relief of others, that which receives, and that which neither pays nor receives. A reviſion alſo cannot take place without relieving the poor from the reſtraints under which they at preſent labour in removing from one pariſh to another, and the expenſiveneſs of litigation ariſing from the preſent code might perhaps be remedied. But in theſe affairs we muſt, as was before mentioned, be particularly careful, leſt the poor ſhould be injured: the rich can take care of themſelves, the poor have none to defend them, and the fault of moſt governments ſeems chiefly to conſiſt in this, that they pay the moſt attention to the maintenance and ſupport of the corinth-

ian

ian capitals of ſociety, as ſome orders have been fooliſhly called, to the great neglect of the comfort and wellfare of the moſt numerous and important part of the community.

The practice of the law at preſent, an evil, which time is likely to increaſe, threatens to render the profeſſion unworthy of a man of liberal education. To ſet a young perſon down to copy declarations, pleas, replications, rejoinders, ſurrejoinders, rebutters, ſurrebutters, is not a probable mean of correcting his judgement, enlivening his imagination, or qualifying him to convince by the ardour of his eloquence. Yet it now ſeems neceſſary that Demoſthenes and Cicero ſhould give place to the precedents in the office of a ſpecial pleader: and, if our laws continue to increaſe with the ſame rapidity as they have done in the preſent reign, the future generation of barriſters muſt ſink into the level of vulgar mechanicks. Already we have ſeen the inferiority of the bar, when the beſt ſpecimens of its rhetorick were compared with the genuine effuſions of eloquence from our popular ſpeak-

Practice of the law.

ers. The oratours of antient times, we are informed, did not bluſh to receive information from the erudite profeſſers of the law, and if the encouragement of eloquence were thought of ſufficient importance, a ſimilar arrangement of offices might not be without its uſe. Were the attornies confined to their preſent employment: were ſpecial pleaders, men of cool heads and fit for ſedentary lives, occupied in arranging, explaining, digeſting our ſtatutes and acts of parliament, were it their buſineſs to take an action from the attorney's hands, decide on its legality, and put it into due form, to be preſented with every ſtatute or caſe relating to it to the barriſter, the time of this latter character, the higheſt in the profeſſion, might be employed in the purſuit of every ſpecies of liberal knowledge. It would not be expected from him, to have an antiquarian inſight into our laws and cuſtoms, nor to enter into all the detail of an attorney's clerk; but we ſhould look for elegance of language, propriety of expreſſion, convincing eloquence, happy alluſions, and to

ſum

ſum up the whole in a few words, we ſhould expect to find in him both at the bar and at the table the gentleman and the ſcholar.*

Tediouſneſs, and language.

The tediouſneſs of the law, as well as its uncertainty, has been a frequent ſubject of complaint; but, though deprecated by every one, there does not ſeem any diſpoſition at preſent in the lords or commons to probe theſe evils to the bottom. Its language too is barbarous and rude: for, under the pretence of avoiding by infinite circumlocutions cavil and diſpute, ſcarce an act of our legiſlature is intelligible to a man of tolerable capacity; and the jargon of a profeſſion, which ought to uſe the cleareſt and beſt terms, is now become proverbial. We ſhould therefore be much indebted to the contending parties, if they would unite their efforts in making an effectual reform in that part of our ſyſtem, on which life, property, and reputation

* Since the inns of court have ceaſed to be places of education, and the exerciſes there are merely formal, might not the privilege of pleading at the bar be allowed to any one, in whom the plaintiff places confidence?

ſo much depend. The taſk is not ſo arduous as may be apprehended: there are, among us, men of learning and abilities, as well qualified for this undertaking as the celebrated lawyers in the days of Juſtinian; and the only thing required on the part of the legiſlature and people is to be ſeriouſly perſuaded, that internal good government is more productive of general happineſs, than the interference in foreign politicks, and the triumphs of a victorious navy.

Religion. III. In peruſing the hiſtory of antient or modern times, the connection which has always taken place between religion and legiſlation muſt ſtrike every attentive reader. This union is ſuppoſed to be of a peculiar nature, and, while in our own country the grave divine celebrates it as an alliance between church and ſtate, the jolly toper no leſs religiouſly fills up the bumper to church and king. The latter character means no diſreſpect to his ſovereign, by making him give place to an inſtitution eſteemed ſacred by the vulgar; but the former, lamenting the loſs of antient

tient ſplendour, is willing to retain as long as poſſible this laſt veſtige of eccleſiaſtical power. Seventeen centuries ago the church, creeping on the ground, bowed its head to the authority of Cæſar, within three centuries after we find her in the embraces of a warlike emperour; the harlot ſoon learned to tread on the necks of kings, and, drenched with the blood of ſaints and martyrs, obtained univerſal empire. Our anceſtours groaned under her iron yoke, the fruit of their induſtry was carried away to feed her pampered appetite, and to ſatiate her luxurious paramours. The iſland was completely devoted to her luſt; but vice is never ſecure in its ſeat, it has no ſtable hold, the ſame capricious and inordinate paſſions which tempt men to forſake the fair object of their betrothed love, lead them ſoon to caſt away in diſguſt the loathſome proſtitute. To capricious and inordinate paſſion we are indebted for deliverance from the harlot's power: ſhe can no longer free the ſubject from his allegiance, nor compell the monarch to accept the crown at the

footſtool of her throne. Her ſuperiority is gone, and proteſtant divines ſhould beware of applying thoſe terms to a political inſtitution of this country, which muſt involve them in all the guilt of antichriſtian uſurpation.

Alliance between church and ſtate a fiction.

The alliance between church and ſtate is a fiction, which could not be realized in this country, without ſubjecting the abetters of it to the penalties of high treaſon. We might as well talk of an alliance between army and ſtate, navy and ſtate, law and ſtate. Would queen Elizabeth have permitted this language, and is it not equally certain, that ſuch expreſſions muſt be diſpleaſing to every branch of the Brunſwick family? Has the ſtate, from the moment it became proteſtant, ever made an alliance with any church, and do not all our eccleſiaſtical laws depend on the authority of parliament? Where does the church meet, where does it make laws, where does it propoſe terms of mutual kindneſs to her ally the ſtate? In this iſland are two inſtitutions called the churches of England and Scotland, for which the

the clergy of the church of England are ordered by law to command the prayers of every congregation. Are they both allies of the ſtate? Is there alſo any alliance between the two ſacred bodies? Let us beware of the deception couched in ambiguous terms; for there is no ſociety in this country that can pretend to make terms with the ſtate, nor is there any perſon, whoſe authority does not depend on an act of parliament. And let divines be particularly cautious, leſt king and people, recollecting the ſufferings of former times, ſhould be tempted to ſuſpect, that, as long as there are prieſts, the laity is in danger of being duped by the prieſthood.

Church of England a political inſtitution.

The eſtabliſhed church of England can be conſidered only as a political inſtitution. The deſign of it is to celebrate at certain times religious worſhip, and to inſtruct the people in certain doctrines laid down by act of parliament. Whether the inſtruction communicated is ſuited to the preſent times, and whether the expence attending it is proportioned to the benefits, which the ſubject de-

rives from it, are queſtions of political enquiry. The farmer and the land-holder complain, that tithes are a grievous oppreſſion, that thereby induſtry is cramped, and our lands are deprived of their proper culture. Divines, ſay they, laid a claim in former ages to the produce of our fields, in conſequence of a regulation for very different purpoſes in a diſtant region, and they not only perſuaded our legiſlature to adopt it, but have exacted the odious tax in a manner unknown to the favoured people of God. The cuſtoms of Judea are no rule for this country, and conſequently it is no argument againſt our preſent mode of paying the clergy, that we have deviated widely from the moſaical inſtitution. We are intereſted only in the enquiry, whether a certain body of men ſhould depend on government or the people for its ſubſiſtence, or by poſſeſſing a conſiderable ſtake in the landed property, be in a great meaſure rendered independant of both. The queſtion has on every ſide its difficulties. Suppoſing the clergy to be like the army or navy under the executive power, there

there is a danger in our complicated form of government, leſt the regal part ſhould abſorb that of the other two bodies. For ten thouſand men in black under the direction of an individual are a far more formidable body, than ten thouſand times that number in arms, and more likely to produce the greateſt injury to civil ſociety.

If checks could be found to remedy the inconvenience attending the abſolute dependance of the clergy on the crown, ſuch a ſyſtem would be found to poſſeſs great advantages: for, as the military are ſent only, where their preſence is neceſſary, the religious corps would be diſpoſed in a manner more beneficial to the kingdom. We ſhould not ſee them in groupes in ſome towns encouraging, or rather being the patrons of every ſpecies of luxury, while extenſive diſtricts are entruſted to the care of a few curates: a regular diſpoſition of them might take place, which, from a proper attention to the learning and morals in the candidates for the office of publick inſtructers, would be attended with

infinite benefit to the lower claſſes of the community. Here then is a ſubject, which might uſefully employ the thoughts of our contending parties. Let them endeavour to remove the complaints of our landholders, taking care at the ſame time that ſo large a body as the clergy ſhould not be entruſted with any temporal power, and that the profeſſion ſhould poſſeſs ſuch emoluments, as might render it a proper purſuit for men of liberal education.

Reviſion of the liturgy recommended.

Every thing in this world convinces us, that there is only one being in his own nature unchangeable. The inſtitutions of man can ſcarce be ſuited to one generation, and the wiſdom of government would in no inſtance more eminently diſplay itſelf, than by accommodating its laws to the improvement of knowledge in every age. The parliament, which appointed, and the people, which received the form of worſhip now in uſe, entertained very different notions from ours on religious ſubjects. It could not be otherwiſe: for, by rejecting many articles in the creed of their anceſtours, they entered into

contro-

controverſies, which paved the way for future improvement. This was perceived in the next century, but unfortunately the ruling powers, by calling together men of too diſcordant opinions, and endeavouring to reconcile parties ſeparated from each other by a ſeries of mutual injuries, confirmed by this experiment a truth, with which they ought to have been acquainted, that the councils of divines of different churches are never attended with ſucceſs. The liturgy of the church of England is a compoſition derived from the maſs book of Rome, over which, if it has in ſome reſpects a manifeſt ſuperiority, 'it is very far from that ſtandard of purity in' its arrangement, language, or 'doctrine, which is required from ſuch compoſitions.' The ableſt writers in its defence acknowledge, that it is ſuſceptible of improvement, but are fearful of the danger attending every reform. We have ſeen the cauſe of failure in the laſt century, and, to avoid the ſplitting on the ſame rock, might not the legiſlature appoint commiſſioners of its own church to reviſe the book of prayers, and to propoſe

propoſe a form better ſuited to the preſent times? This ſhould not however ſuperſede the liturgy in preſent uſe. There may be congregations attached to the common liturgy, whoſe prejudices ſhould be humoured, and, inſtead of forcing another on any one, the legiſlature need only permit the approved forms to be read in thoſe churches, where the people are willing to give them admiſſion. Thus continual improvements might be made in the form of worſhip, the more imperfect liturgies would gradually diſappear, and in a few centuries perhaps the religious antipathies of the preſent days would ceaſe to influence the conduct and embitter the lives of our poſterity.

Teſt laws. The reform of our religious eſtabliſhment cannot, it is obvious, engage our attention without ſome animadverſions on a controverſy, which has been lately carried on with a conſiderable degree of animoſity. To preſerve the eſtabliſhment it was thought neceſſary in the laſt century, to require from every officer under the executive government a religious teſt. Of courſe a degree of honour has

has been attached to the believers, or pretended believers, of certain doctrines, and the diſſentients have been involved in a correſponding portion of diſgrace. In conſidering this queſtion, we are to look upon theſe bodies merely as political factions; for, did we refer to the book, which both parties are ſuppoſed to make the guide of all their actions and opinions, the queſtion will not admit a moments debate. By calling themſelves chriſtians, they ought in every inſtance to yield to our ſaviour's precepts and example, and there is not a propoſition in Euclid clearer than this, that no body of chriſtians is authoriſed by the goſpel, to allure men to its party by civil emoluments, or on account of religious opinions to deprive them of civil advantages.

Repeal of the teſt laws not dangerous, either from the admiſſion of diſſenters into offices,

Is then a teſt neceſſary to preſerve the political exiſtence of the church of England? We ſhall be able to anſwer this queſtion by conſidering the danger that would immediately accrue from the removal of the teſt. In ſome of our manufacturing towns diſſenters would ſhare with churchmen in municipal offices: a few, and very

very few, would exerciſe in counties the office of juſtice of the peace. The latter office depending on the crown, the moment there was an appearance of danger, it might be removed by ſtriking the diſaffected out of the commiſſion. Now, is it probable, that an inſtitution, whoſe influence, from its own wealth conſiderable, is ſupported by that of the nobility, and the greater part of the landed intereſt of this country, could receive any injury from the admiſſion of a few perſons into municipal offices. The ſuppoſition is abſurd, and the apprehenſion of danger muſt ariſe from a ſuſpicion of the diſſenters receiving, on the removal of the teſt, a vaſt acceſſion of numbers, united together in a firm reſolution, to deſtroy the religious eſtabliſhment. But perſons, who reaſon in this manner, are not aware, that the diſſenters do not by any means form a compact body; and that the three powers, preſbyterians, baptiſts, and independants, allied together for one ſingle purpoſe, would, on the obtaining of that point, retire to their different camps, and be ſeparated from each other by the uſual marks of theological hatred.

On

On what ground are we to expect an increaſe of their numbers? The majority of the people, who do not look forward to any thing but the fruits of their induſtry, will always go to that place of worſhip, which they think the beſt: and, unleſs it can be proved, that the worſhip of the three bodies above-mentioned is far ſuperiour to that of the church of England, they muſt remain, as they have been for ſome time, increaſing only with the increaſing population of the country.

or the probable increaſe of their number,

Let any man then compare together coolly the worſhip of theſe different bodies. The object of worſhip, generally ſpeaking, for there are few congregations which worſhip only the one true god, is the ſame in all; ſome uſing a preſcribed form, others what is called extempore prayer. The ſuperiority on either ſide depends ſo much on the abilities of the ſpeakers or readers, that, on conſidering the rank of life from whence they are reſpectively taken, and the advantages of education, which they enjoy, it will appear improbable, that the church of England ſhould be in-

or the prevalence of their mode of worſhip,

 feriour

ferior to its opponents. The harmonious numbers of Watt's hymns, the commonly received book among the diſſenters, may be ſuppoſed to give them a ſuperiority in one part of the ſervice over the church; but the pſalms of Sternhold and Hopkins, though deficient in metre, do not inculcate unſcriptural doctrines, nor does their language, though ſimple and unadorned, ever ſink into the lullabies of the lyrick poet. The ſermons of the church of England, whether conſidered as ſpecimens of eloquence, as treatiſes of moral philoſophy or didactick theology, do not ſuffer on a compariſon with thoſe of the diſſenting party: and there are few churches, which could bear ſuch language or ſentiments, as are too frequently uttered in ſeveral meetings. Hence the danger, apprehended from the mode of worſhip among the three bodies above-mentioned, ſeems to be chimerical, and government has, by a ſufficiently accurate ſurvey, been informed, that the number of opponents to the church eſtabliſhment cannot occaſion any ground of alarm: but perhaps neither

ther government, nor churchmen, nor diſſenters are aware of the increaſe of a body, already more numerous and better organized than the latter party, and which may, in no length of time, occaſion a revolution in our eccleſiaſtical hiſtory.

Although no danger is to be apprehended from the removal of the teſt, government may very fairly demand; what advantages ſhall we derive by departing from our old laws and favouring the diſſenters? The anſwer is obvious. By removing a reaſonable cauſe of complaint from the moſt induſtrious and peaceable of your ſubjects, you preſerve a ſteadier attachment to the eſtabliſhed authority. There is ſomething in the heart of man, which revolts at oppreſſion; and to be beloved, you muſt render yourſelves worthy of affection. The conduct of churchmen towards diſſenters has been, and is, diſgraceful in the extreme: it is time to caſt away the leaven of party ſpirit, and to act as chriſtians. By this, ſays our Saviour, ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye love one another.

but beneficial to the ſtate.

and juſtifiable by the example of the ſupreme magiſtrate.

Did the repeal of the teſt act depend only on one part of the legiſlature, it cannot be ſuppoſed, that the redreſs of the diſſenters would be delayed a moment. For, how could the firſt magiſtrate deny that to a great part of the people, which, in different places acknowledging his authority, he claims for himſelf. Either he is a member of the church of England, or he is not. If he is a member of the church of England, by paſſing into Scotland he becomes a diſſenter, but is not on that account deprived of his office: another form of religion prevails in Hanover, but he retains his electorate. What could prevent him then from ſaying to the diſſenters, As my temporal office is not in other countries affected by my religious opinions, neither ſhall you ſuffer any civil injuries for diſſenting from the eſtabliſhment of England. Be peaceable citizens, and worſhip God as you pleaſe; your religion no where teaches you to diſobey your civil governours, except when they preſume to interfere in matters of conſcience.

It

It is much to be lamented, that, in treating on a ſubject relating to religious opinions, we cannot perſuade the profeſſers of chriſtianity, to abide by the commands of their common maſter: inſtead of which, not only the ſtateſman, but thoſe who pride themſelves on being miniſters of the goſpel, ſet up in direct oppoſition to him maxims of worldly policy. The line of truth is direct and clear, the paths of errour are infinite. In the conflicts of paſſions and prejudice in a houſe of commons the ſtill voice of chriſtianity cannot always be heard; the ſtateſman is too apt to conſider it as a ſilly deviſed fable, well calculated to keep the people in order, and there are few willing to receive it in the only manner, which commands attention, as the direct word of God. Hence perhaps the diſſenters would do well, to leave the ſtate entirely to itſelf, content, as the early chriſtians were, to draw men to a purer form of worſhip, and to truſt to a change of opinion for entire relief from perſecution. The moſt improbable tales were in early times vented of the chriſtians; their meet-

Paſſions and prejudices intereſted in oppoſing it.

ings

ings were burnt down, and their perſons were aſſaulted. Is it to be wondered at, that the ſame practices ſhould, by the enlightened infidel, the intereſted churchman, and the ignorant populace, be in our days both repeated and applauded? 'The ſame paſſions will every where produce on certain minds the ſame effect; and the prieſt in every age, whether he celebrates the orgies of Bacchus, or ſolemnizes the rites of the Euchariſt, will, ſhould either his victims or his allowance fail, oppoſe in either caſe every truth, which threatens to undermine his altars, or weaken his ſacerdotal authority.

Improvement recommended to both churchmen and diſſenters.

'The church ſtands certainly in need of reform, the diſſenters would do well to conſider alſo, whether they are not far, very far from the ſummit of chriſtian perfection. The few of us diſperſed over England, who, through fear and love of the one true god, are obliged to ſeparate ourſelves from both parties, cannot but view with concern, that, while they are ſo much occupied in a matter of ſmall temporal importance, the great truths of religion are neglected:

lected; and we muſt never let ſlip any opportunity of exciting them to examine and improve their ſeparate forms of worſhip and religious communion.

Digreſſion on the abuſes prevailing in chriſtendom at large.

'That chriſtianity has made very little progreſs for the laſt fourteen hundred years, is obvious to every reader of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, and the profeſſers of it ought not to be ſurprized, ſince, during ſo long a period, the world has been under the influence of two opinions, nearly ſubverſive of all true religion.

Deviation from the worſhip of the one true god.

'1. The firſt is a very antient opinion, which it was the intention of the jewiſh diſpenſation to eradicate, by ſubſtituting in its place a long loſt and almoſt ſelf evident truth, That there is one god, and only one god is ſuppoſed by many to be a truth attainable by human reaſon; but if it were not ſo, the authority of revelation has eſtabliſhed it, and the whole heathen mythology is declared to be a fit object of ridicule.*

Still

* A learned writer on the mythology of the ancients makes the following remarks on the groſſneſs of their ſuperſtition: "Who would

Still this truth, confirmed by various acts of omnipotence, did not overcome entirely the prejudices of the choſen people of God; and as they aſſociated with the worſhip of Jehovah that of the neighbouring nations, the great body of chriſtians has imbibed, and glories in imbibing from the ſchools of Athens, opinions no where ſanctioned in ſcripture, and has aſſociated the worſhip of created beings, with that of the god and father of Jeſus Chriſt. So great a deviation from truth muſt neceſſarily be attempted with dreadful effects, the moſt ſolemn act of life is rendered childiſh, and the unbeliever con-

" would imagine, that one of the wiſeſt na-
" tions that ever exiſted, could reſt ſatisfied
" with ſuch idle figments: and how can we ac-
" count for theſe illuſions which overſpread the
" brighteſt minds? We ſee knowing and experi-
" enced people inventing the moſt childiſh tales;
" lovers of ſcience adopting them; and they are
" finally recorded by the grave hiſtorian: all
" which would not appear credible, had not we
" theſe evidences ſo immediately tranſmitted
" from them. And it is to be obſerved, that this
" blindneſs is only in regard to their religion; and
" to their mythology, which was grounded there-
" upon. In all other reſpects they were the wiſeſt
" of the ſons of men." What will the writers on the mythology of the eighteenth century think, a thouſand years hence, of the European figments?

found-

founding the purity of the goſpel with the prejudice of its profeſſers, thinks himſelf entitled to ridicule religion, and to deſpiſe chriſtianity. Let churchmen and diſſenters examine ſeriouſly how far they have deviated from the true faith, and, as they reject many points eſtabliſhed by the councils of the romiſh church, let them expunge every thing, which ſavouring of its leaven, is to be found in preſbyterian ſynods or epiſcopal convocations.'

Corporate diſtinction of clergy and laity.

2. When men blindly receive, inſtead of revealed truths, the wild fancies of ſpeculative heathens, it is not to be wondered at, if the other parts of their ſyſtem ſhould be in oppoſition to the plaineſt dictates of chriſtianity. Our ſaviour was frequently under the neceſſity of correcting the fooliſh vanity of his meſſengers, and, foreſeeing the evil conſequences of ambition, he reprobated in the ſtrongeſt terms every deſire of pre-eminence among his diſciples. Yet how little have either his precepts or his own example been obſerved. We have ſeen in the church of Rome, with what eaſe the beſt

ſyſtem of religion and morals may be perverted to the moſt deteſtable purpoſes, but forget, that the ſame leaven ferments in the bodies glorying in a ſeparation from her, and a reformation, as it is improperly called, of her abuſes. The love of pre-eminence is the ſecond circumſtance, that has been a fatal hindrance to the progreſs of chriſtianity. The chriſtian world has been divided into two parts, clergy and laity, diſtinguiſhed both by dreſs and manners from each other. The clergy every where affect a ſuperiority, and in conſequence claim to be indulged with peculiar power and privileges. It was natural, that when this pre-eminence was once eſtabliſhed in the minds of the degraded laity, the clergy ſhould get the countenance of the legiſlature, for the framing of laws, not only to preſerve their own dignity, but to prevent the interference of the people in eccleſiaſtical concerns. Hence 'eccleſiaſtical courts, eccleſiaſtical ranks and titles,' eccleſiaſtical dreſs, 'all repugnant to the ſpirit of chriſtianity. The laity, like brute beaſts, ſit tamely under this uſurpation: a man, if

a prieſt or miniſter enters, is not a maſter of his own houſe, he muſt not thank God for the bleſſings of providence at his own table, he cannot pledge his faith to a lovely woman without the interference of the prieſt, his offspring muſt be ſprinkled by ſacred hands, and at death he is not committed to his long home without another ſpiritual incantation.

'Theſe ſuperſtitious prejudices are without doubt highly beneficial to the intereſt of the clerical community, but the morals of neither party are conſulted. The laity are apt to imagine, that there are ſome practices, in which they may be indulged without any imputation on their chriſtian character; and the gentleman in black is ſuppoſed to put on a particular ſet of features and behaviour with his cloaths.' The ſimplicity of the goſpel admits nothing of this ſort. All chriſtians are equally ſervants of one common lord, equally bound by his precepts, and equally entitled to the privileges of his religion. It may be neceſſary to have perſons well educated for the inſtruction of the people, and the conducting

Conſequences of this corporate diſtinction.

of the publick worſhip, but as far as this is regulated by the civil power, the body is political, not ſpiritual. It may be expedient, that one perſon ſhould conduct the worſhip of a diſſenting congregation, but it is dangerous to aſſociate the performers of this office in a kind of ſpiritual connection. The diſſenters view with an evil eye the viſitations of archbiſhops, biſhops, archdeacons, &c. but the aſſemblies of their miniſters, whether at the opening of a chapel, the ordaining of a brother miniſter, or for various other purpoſes, denote as much love of ſpiritual pre-eminence, as is to be found in the eſtabliſhed church.

It would be endleſs to purſue the various evils that ſpring out of this ſtrange diſtinction among chriſtians. Age and abilities command reſpect, it is willingly paid by every liberal mind and lover of good order; from the profeſſion alſo of a teacher of chriſtianity it ought not to be withheld. But, let it be kept within due bounds, let not the teacher of a petty meeting claim the authority of a pope, let him not be the means of

ſetting

ſetting families and congregations at variance. It is a great miſtake to ſuppoſe, that perſecution is confined to eſtabliſhed churches; there is a pernicious ſort prevailing among ſectaries, and to diſſent from the ſociety, of which one is a member, is too frequently attended with the loſs of an income. Not to omit, that the terms heterodox, heretick, deiſt, infidel are ſcattered abroad with great rapidity in diſſenting communities, and under pretext of conſulting the good of his ſoul, a narrow-minded congregation will frequently deprive an individual of all his earthly comfort.

Subject reſumed.

The contending parties, whom we are addreſſing, will however conſider this as a digreſſion, and leave to others the care of directing the ſpiritual concerns, and meliorating the religious opinions of mankind. It ſuffices, that we have pointed out ſome objects which more immediately call for their attention. Let them endeavour to remove the tithes, provide for an amendment of the liturgy, and repeal the teſt act, and having done this, they may ſafely leave farther improvements on a chriſtian baſis

baſis to thoſe who ſhall, by their means, be enabled to underſtand better the principle of true religion.

Objections anſwered. 1. Reforms too numerous.

To every thing that has been urged in the preceeding pages, two formidable objections occur: firſt, that the reforms propoſed are too numerous; and, ſecondly, that this is by no means the time to entertain any thoughts of reform. With reſpect to the number of reforms it may be anſwered, that we are not to look either to the number or magnitude, but to the expediency of them, and farther it is not ſuppoſed, that all theſe reforms ſhould take place at the ſame time: they are not to be undertaken without due care and deliberation. Still there are ſome things, which may be put immediately into execution: the game and the teſt laws may be repealed, a new code of criminal law framed, the liturgy reviſed, and the boroughs regulated in this ſeſſion of parliament. And the people ſeeing, that the houſe of commons, inſtead of indulging in ſo much perſonal altercation and frivolous panegyrick, is ſeriouſly occupied in promoting and improving the well-

fare

ſare of the ſtate, will thankfully receive theſe preſages of better times, and contentedly wait till a longer period ſhall have put an end to all their grievances.

2. The trite argument, that this is not the time to reform, can no longer have any weight on the minds of engliſhmen. It has been repeated in periods of publick commotion and the profoundeſt peace. The natural indolence of man may plead for the ſupport of abuſes, but the example of a neighbouring nation muſt ſurely produce an effect in the cabinet of every monarch. From neglecting to examine and correct the abuſes, prevailing through length of time in an extenſive empire, we have ſeen a monarch hurled from his throne, the moſt powerful nobility in Europe driven from their caſtles, and the richeſt hierarchy expelled from their altars. Had the monarch ſeaſonably given up ſome uſeleſs prerogatives, he might ſtill have worn the crown; had the nobility conſented to relinquiſh thoſe feudal privileges, which were deſigned only for barbarous ages, they might have retained their titles; could

2. Time for reform improper.

could the clergy have ſubmitted to be citizens, they might ſtill have been in poſſeſſion of wealth and influence. The proper time to correct any abuſe, and remedy any grievance, is the inſtant they are known; if neglected they continue to increaſe, till the ruling powers are in fear for their own ſafety, and being over-awed by the party, intereſted in corruption, they can neither retreat nor proceed without endangering the common weal.

The preſent time particularly favourable for reform.

Happily for this country we are in a very different ſituation. There is no party to over-awe the government, and the people are united to give its meaſures effectual ſupport. Nothing can be forced upon it: every reform muſt proceed from, and be under the direction of the ruling powers. How much then is it to be deſired, that ſuch an opportunity of ſetting government on its beſt foundation ſhould not be loſt, and that a timely removal of every grievance may render the name of another revolution diſguſtfull to engliſhmen. Should this opportunity be loſt, it may never occur again. The diſcontented party,

party, for there is, we have been informed by high authority, one ſufficiently numerous to excite alarm, may increaſe, and by dwelling upon real evils, undermine that power, which was reſolved not to liſten to any terms of reconciliation. Whatever may be our fate with reſpect to foreign nations, peace and union are the greateſt objects at home.

Let the republicans be moderate in their demands, the anti-republicans not pertinacious in oppoſing every reform, and government, ſtrengthened by the acceſſion of both parties to it as a centre of union, will preſent to the world a compact body, firmly united to preſerve an improving conſtitution, and to promote the publick happineſs. Concluſion.

APPENDIX,

ON THE

EXECUTION OF LOUIS CAPET.

LOUIS CAPET has afforded an excellent topick for parliamentary declamation. Let us ſtrip the ſubject of figures of rhetorick, and no engliſhman need be alarmed at the execution of an individual at Paris. Louis Capet was once king of France, and entitled to the honours due to that exalted ſtation. The ſupreme power in the nation declared, that France ſhould be a republick: from that moment Louis Capet loſt his titles. He was accuſed of enormous crimes, confined as a ſtate priſoner, tried by the national convention, found guilty, condemned, and executed. What is there wonderful in all this? Our revolution, the boaſt of the preſent days, purſued the ſame conduct as nearly as poſſible. Our convention declared, that James the 2d ſhould be no longer king: it did not chuſe to aboliſh kingſhip, but dignified William the 3d with legal honours. James was ſtripped of his titles, and became plain James Stuart, and the republican William became a ſovereign. James was not tried, condemned, executed, becauſe he ſaved his life by flight: but the laws againſt himſelf and his ſon, and the proceedings in the years fifteen and forty-five, muſt convince the moſt ſuperficial reaſoner, that the maxims of the engliſh

and french nations, with reſpect to the dethroning of kings, are exactly the ſame. But ſome one will ſay, Louis Capet was unjuſtly condemned. Ninety-nine out of a hundred, who make this objection, have not given themſelves the trouble of examining the records of the trial: and why ſhould I give greater credit to the remaining objectour than to the verdict of the court? If Louis Capet did, when king, encourage the invaſion of his country, however we may be inclined to pity the unfortunate man for the errour of his conduct, we have no right to proclaim him innocent in point of law. It is, in ſhort, no buſineſs of ours, and if all the crowned heads on the continent are taken off, it is no buſineſs of ours. We ſhould be unworthy of the conſtitution ſettled at the revolution, and enemies to the Brunſwick family now ſeated on our throne, if we denied to any nation the right of ſettling, as it pleaſed, its own internal government. Theſe ſentiments do not prevent us from commiſerating the ſituation of the french refugees. They are entitled to our compaſſion; and it is but right, that we ſhould attend to their diſtreſſes, ſince foreign countries have been put to the expence of maintaining thoſe refugees from our own iſland, who, for their attachment to an ancient family, were, by the rigour of the two former reigns, ſubjected to all the penalties exacted from recuſants by the preſent government in France.

THE EFFECT OF WAR

ON THE

POOR.

THREE days after the debate on the king's meſſage, I was walking from my friend's houſe to the neighbouring town to inſpect the printing of theſe few ſheets, and, in my way, joined company with two men of the village, who, being employed by the woolſtaplers to let out ſpinning to the poor, had lately received orders to lower the value of labour. We were talking on this ſubject, when the exclamations of a groupe of poor women going to market, who over-heard our converſation, made an impreſſion on my mind, which all the eloquence of the houſes of lords and commons cannot efface. We are to be ſconced three-pence in the ſhilling; let others work for me, I'll not. We are to be ſconced a fourth part of our labour. What is all this for? I did not dare to tell them what it was for, nor to add inſult to miſery. What is the beheading of a monarch to them? What is the navigation of the Scheldt to them? What is the freedom of a great nation to them but reaſon for joy? Yet the debating only on theſe ſubjects has reached their cottages. They are already ſconced three-pence in the ſhilling. What muſt be their fate, when we ſuffer under the moſt odious ſcourge of the human race, and the accu-

accumulation of taxes takes away half that daily bread, which is ſcarce ſufficient at preſent for their ſupport?

Oh! that I had the warning voice of an antient prophet, that I might penetrate into the inmoſt receſſes of palaces, and appall the haranguers of ſenates! I would uſe no other language than that of the poor market women. I would cry aloud in the ears of the firſt magiſtrate, We are ſconced three-pence in the ſhilling, the fourth part of our labour, for what? I would addreſs myſelf to the deliberating bodies, We are ſconced three-pence in the ſhilling, the fourth part of our labours, for what? Is there a man, that could ſtand out againſt this eloquence? Yes; thouſands. Three-pence in the ſhilling for ſpinning conveys no ideas to them. They know not what a cottage is; they know not how the poor live, how they make up their ſcanty meal. Perhaps there may be ſome one in our houſe of commons, whoſe feelings are in union with mine; communicate them to your colleagues, impreſs them with the horrour attendant on their deliberations; tell them what the deduction of three-pence in the ſhilling occaſions among the myriads of England. And ſhould any grave courtier, pitying the diſtreſſes of the poor, be anxious to relieve them, ſay to him, There is an eaſy method: let the firſt magiſtrate, the peers, the repreſentatives of the people, the rich men of the nation, all who are for war, be ſconced one fourth part of their annual income to defray the expence of it. Let them be the firſt ſufferers; let the burden fall on them, not on the poor. Alaſs! my poor country-

countrymen, how many years calamity awaits you, before a ſingle diſh or a glaſs of wine will be withdrawn from the tables of opulence!

At this moment, perhaps, the decree is gone forth for war. Let others talk of glory; let others celebrate the heroes, who are to deluge the world with blood: the words of the poor market women will ſtill reſound in my ears, We are ſconced three-pence in the ſhilling, one fourth part of our labour. For what?

FINIS.